



Developing a Theory of Change to ensure Catalyst's strategic priorities contribute to their vision and desired impact

Case Study: Catalyst Community Developments Society

Catalyst is a BC-based not-for-profit real estate developer. They build affordable and inspiring rental homes and places for people to live and work by partnering with non-profits to unlock the value of their real estate assets and reinvest that value back into BC communities.



Looking to scale their operation geographically and to integrate more services, Catalyst engaged Junxion to help them create a five-year strategic plan that reflected the new horizon for their ambitions as a company.

We proposed to bring key people across the organization together to share their team's activities and ambitions and knit them together into one shared Theory of Change.



Junxion took things to the next level, pushing us to think of things we hadn't considered and encouraging stakeholders to express ideas and thoughts that weren't premeditated.

LUKE HARRISON,
CEO, CATALYST

The Business Challenge

At the beginning of the strategic planning process, Junxion had already worked with Catalyst to identify an impact statement: “Everyone has an open door to a home and community that improves their wellbeing and access to opportunity.”

While there was buy-in to this eventual impact goal, Catalyst staff were unclear about how all the different strategic activities that teams were responsible for came together to deliver it.

Junxion proposed a Theory of Change (ToC) process to help Catalyst ensure that its strategic themes were aligned with the vision, to identify a clear pathway to impact and ensure staff understood their role in achieving the organization's ambition.

“I really liked the visual, ‘bottom up’ approach to long-term change. It’s exciting to talk about this stuff, as Catalyst has some pretty big dreams!”
– Catalyst employee reflecting on the Theory of Change process.

How We Helped

A Theory of Change is both a process and a product. The process is deliberately inclusive and involved a pair of half day workshops with all Catalyst staff and several stakeholders. Setting Catalyst’s impact statement at one end and their strategic themes at the other, Junxion helped Catalyst identify the short- and longer-term outcomes that bridge the gap.

The first workshop was a facilitated brainstorm looking at the factors that directly and indirectly influence Catalyst’s impact statement. The group then captured the changes for stakeholders that would occur because of Catalyst’s work.

Junxion refined these findings and validated them with a second workshop, drawing connections between outcomes and applying timeframes. This was captured in a clearly laid-out diagram with a supporting narrative.

Measuring Success

One outcome of the Theory of Change process is staff feel that their voices have been heard. This was clear in feedback after the workshops. Providing interim versions of the final ToC allows participants to see how their ideas contribute to the whole.

Another benefit of Theory of Change work is the positive impact it has on staff relationships, building and strengthening cross organisational working. Given Catalyst were working remotely at the time, the ToC served a team-building benefit as well.

After delivering the Theory of Change, Junxion were able to quickly complete Catalyst’s strategic plan. The ToC provides the organization with a roadmap to focus on the right strategic issues, as well as a guide to hold itself accountable to when evaluating the success of its strategy.

Are you keen to map your outcomes, measure your impact and report effectively? Reach out to [Mike Rowlands](#) in Vancouver, [Shayla Meyer](#) in Toronto, or [Adam Garfunkel](#) in the UK to start a conversation.